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The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, *January* 5. 1695.

Quest. 1. A *Certain Lawyer was attended by his Client for advise in matter of right to a* Coalpit, *who gave him his opinion that he had a very* good cause *of it, and wisht him to try his* right; *after which the* Client *consider'd of it until that* Lawyer *came to be advanc'd to a* Judicial Office, *by reason whereof he had then some profits out of the said* Coalpit; *it so happen'd that the said Cause came to be try'd before him, and then he was of* another opinion, *and gave the* Jury *direction to bring in their* Verdict *against his* Client. Qu. *Whether it mayn't, without breach of* Charity, *be presum'd that his own* Interest *in the* Coalpit *was the cause of the change of his former opinion, which if his* Client *had not rely'd on, he'd ne've have* try'd *the* cause, *but might have sav'd a great deal of* Expence?

Answ. The *case was alser'd*, and if no other Reason but *Interest* perswaded the *Lawyer* to change his mind, 'tis as easy a matter to Judge of his *sincerity*, and *honesty*, as of your *Wisdom*, to try a cause before one whom you had so much reason to suspect wou'd now be engag'd against you.

Quest. 2. *What do you think of the* famous Sicelides Muse *of* Virgil? *Whether that new World, and those strange things he there mentions, were apply'd by him to* Pollo's Son *and his Consulship, or he may not be thought to have had some higher meaning?*

Answ. The whole is interpreted by *Servius* and others, as a Compliment to *Pollio* and his *Son*, or at least to *Augustus Pollio* it seems in his War against the *Illyrians*, or *Dalmatians*, had newly taken *Salonæ*, one of their *Citys*, in which he had a Son born, whom from thence he call'd *Salonimus*. To this *Son*, *Virgil* seems to *refer* most of what he had read in the *Sibyls*, concerning a *strange Child*, about that time to be *born*, who was to renew the World, tho he seems also to have a further *reach* in't, and to compliment *Augustus*, in his *Magni Menses*: and after all, its evident he was widely mistaken in his application of the prophesy, most of which is foretold in the Scripture of our Saviour, and can agree to none but him, and relates to what had been left by the *Cumæan*, or *Erythræan Sibyl*, both the same; and therefore when *Lactantius* says in the place already quoted, these things may be seen in *Erythræa*, he means the same with the *Sibyl* of *Cuma*. There are hardly any Commentators, we think, but are of the opinion, that *Virgil* had read the *Sibyls* Verses, and thence translated what he here makes use of, only *Vandale* will by no means allow it, because of a Decree of the *Senate*, that none shou'd consult 'em besides the *Quindecimviri*. But he forgot that this Decree had been long *antiquated*, even in *Tullys* time, and that now all things were in Confusion, the *Civil Wars* being not yet ended, and that the *Emperor*, or *Dictator*, dispens'd with *Laws*; even tho in full force, and even in this Instance, *Julius Cæsar* having commanded the officers, without the *Senates* leave, to consult those Books, and why might not *Augustus* do as much for *Virgil*? Tho indeed they were but then a collecting the compleat Volumes of 'em, for some had been there ever since *Tarquin*, which collection doubtless was *perus'd*, as well as perfected, by *Learned men*, and who more proper to be employ'd in such a work then *Virgil*? Besides, he mentions the *Cumæan Verse*, which almost all understand of the *Sibyl*, and her distinction of ages. However, to *Pollios* Boy its sure enough what he here produces cou'd not belong, tho we are apt to believe he might himself intend some such thing as a Compliment to him. For how shou'd he govern the world, and *sustain* nature, who dy'd the *Ninth day* after his birth, as is agreed on by *Servius*, with other commentators. Then for *Augustus* himself, it cou'd be no more proper to him then the other, for what shall we make of *parve puer*, by which title he twice calls him? But *Augustus* tare was at leaft a *great Boy* by this time, when he had been now so many years *raffling* for the Empire of the world. But whatere he might intend, 'tis easy to show that the most part of what he here might attribute to those to whom it did not belong, was proper to the times of our Saviour, and foretold of him. As 1st, the *Renovation* of the *World*, which takes up a great part of the *Poem*, and which was prophesy'd of in the sacred books, as reserv'd to the times of the *Messiah*, who was to "*make all things new*. To *reform* the world, destroy *Polytheism* and *Atheism*, and introduce the worship of the *one true God*, and at last, perhaps, renew the whole *Creation* too, as well as the *Sons of God*. 2.] It seems by his; "*Jam Redit & Virgo*, that in the *Cumæan Verses* there was some wondrous *Virgin* prophesy'd of, in this happier revolution of things, which he indeed might understand of *Astræa*, but the *Sibyls*, of the *mother* of this *child* then expected, according to that of the Prophet, "Behold a *Virgin* shall conceive and bring forth a *Son*. 3.] *Jam nova progenies cælo dimittitur alto*, which we must injure by thus translating. "Now a new off-spring from high heaven is sent.] And as honest *Ludovicus Vives* on the place, "no Christian cou'd have more expresly describ'd the Discent of the Son of God, and he reckons those as a parcel of impious people who don't allow many of these expressions, even in their most simple sence, without any thing of straining or allegory, to agree to none but Christ. 4.] *Te duce, siqua maneut, &c.* This *Te duce* shou'd seem by *Virgil* to be intended of *Pollio*, not his son, because of the *Te Consule* just before; however thus much we learn by it, that the *Sibyl* had been prophesying that a *child* shou'd come who was "to take away the *sins* of the *World*, and so we are sure did the old prophets of our Saviour. 5.] *Solvent formidine.*] Our Saviours doctrine was Peace, which must be the effect of *Innocence*, as Guilt the cause of fear. 6.] *Ille deum vitam accipiet, &c.*] *Pollios son* was never *Deify'd*. And for the *seeing Gods* and *Heroes* which he mentions in the next verse, 'twas fulfil'd at our Saviours Transfiguration, and several other places. 7.] *Pacatumq; reget patriis virtutibus orbem.*] We may also venture to translate this, "he shall sit upon the Throne of his Father [*David*] and reign over the House of *Israel*, and of the increase of his Kingdom and of Peace there shall be no end. But what's this to *Pollios son*? 8.] *At tibi prima puer, nullo munuscula cultu, &c.* Those *munuscula*, or *humble Gifts*, may relate to the shepherds waiting on our Saviour at his birth, who we can scarce suppose came *empty handed*, and if they brought any Gifts, they must be such as these, *Garlands*, Milk, &c. The *Voluntarys* of the *Earth*, and nature. 9.] *Nec magnos metuent armenta Leones*] exactly *Isaiah*. "The *Lyon* shall eat *straw* like the *Ox*, "all shall be peace. 10.] *Occidet & serpens, &c.*] As "before, the sucking child shall play on the hole of the "*Asp*; and the *old serpent* was to be cast down; and for our Saviours followers, he had expresly promis'd 'em that.

Blew poisons harmless thro their veins shou'd flow,
Vipers and Asps innoxious worms, &c.

11.] *Assyrium vulgo nascetur amomum.*] What if in this, shou'd be wrapt up the spreading of the truth from the *Jews*, all the world over?

12.] *At simul Heroum laudes.*] Herein and in what follows, seems to be signify'd, that the world won'd be

better

better by the *progreſs* of the *Goſpel*, and yet ſtill there wou'd be.

13.] *Priſcæ veſtigia fraudis*] the footſteps of ancient *Fraud*, not violence; therefore this relates not to the Wars between the *Triumvirs*. However *Virgils* copy was plainer, tho he might miſtake, and the *Sibyl* referr'd to the *cheat* of the *old ſerpent*, as the effects of which there wou'd ſtill be *coveteouſneſs* and *cheating* in the world until,

14.] *Ubi jam firmata virum te fecerit ætas*] Till the man-child be grown, his *Kingdom come*, and the *ſtone* cut out of the mountain, fill the *whole Earth*, all that follows being a poetical amplification of the happineſs of the golden age, down to

15.] *Aggredere O! magnos (aderit jam tempus) honores!*
Chara Deum ſoboles! magnum Jovis incrementum!

He ſays the time was *juſt approaching*, *aderit jam tempus*, which ſeems the ſame with what the woman told our Saviour; "I know that the *Meſſiah cometh*, ἔρχεται, is juſt expected. Then for the next verſes: How cou'd a poor Conſuls ſon, then kept under by the *Triumvirs*, be with any manner of ſence ſtiled, the dear off-ſpring of the Gods, and the *great increaſe* of *Jupiter*, as well as what follows, of his ſupporting the tottring world, bearing up the pillars of the Earth, *&c.* And ending all in ſuch a *rapture* as ſeems to be more then Poetical?

Thus much we thought might not be unacceptable to the ingenious and Chriſtian Reader, and if any ſuch differ from us either as to this or the former Queſtion about the *Sibyls*, we deſire they'd fairly anſwer what we have advanced, which ſeems at leaſt *probable*, and if we thought it *falſe*, we'd ne're do ſuch a diſſervice to Religion as to produce it in defence of it.

Queſt. 3. *What's the reaſon that in the healing the* 12 *Tribes*, 7*th* Apoc. Dan *is left out?*

Anſw. A Queſtion that it ſeems ſo much puzzled the *Eſſenijs*, as well as many other Commentators, that (as we do now and then) when they found it too *hard to crack*, they threw it by, and ſaid nothing to't. But ſo did not *Grotius*, *Mede*, and *Hammond*, who amongſt 'em give a clear and rational ſolution of the difficulty. Thoſe who are here number'd are thought by Mr. *Mede*, to be the repreſentatives of that *Surragatus Iſrael*, (in which ſence ſome underſtand that of the 12 *Tribes ſcatter'd abroad*,) namely of thoſe Gentiles who were to be grafted into Gods Church in the room of the *unbelieving Jews*; And being to repreſent a true Church, it ſeem'd not ſo proper to inſert among 'em the *Apoſtate Tribe of Dan*, who from the days of *Micah* to the *Captivity*, worſhip'd Idols, which was advanc'd by *Jeroboam*, into a ſort of *Patriarchal* See among the Idolaters, where he plac'd his *bearing* Prieſts and Gods, as others of 'em at *Bethel*. And a juſt *curſe* follow'd this Tribe for their defection, being reduc'd to the *loweſt Ebb* for their ſins. by the perpetual *incurſions* of their *Enemy*, in whoſe exact *road* they lay open to the *Syrians*, *&c.* As being on the utmoſt *Northern Verge* of *Canaan*, about *Paneas*, and the Fountains of *Jordan*. And hence it ſeems they were in proceſs of time ſo much diminiſh'd, that the whole Tribe is omitted in the recital of the *Jewiſh Genealogys* in the *Chronicles*, which *Grotius* thinks was alſo foretold in *Amos* 8. 14. "They that ſwear by the ſin of *Samaria*, and ſay, thy God, O! *Dan*, liveth, *&c.* Even they ſhall fall and never riſe up again. Accordingly the ſame Author tells us, from the Tradition of the *Jews*, that this Tribe was reduc'd to *one Family*, that of *Huſſim*, and from *Joannes Antiochenus*, that thoſe few of 'em who remain'd, at laſt left their own *Inheritance*, and took ſhelter among the *Phœnitians*. And we may obſerve that even *Ephraim* is not here perſonally menti-on'd, but the Tribe of *Joſeph* inſtead of him, becauſe the *Ephraimites* were alſo infamous for their *Defection* and *Idolatry*. And inſtead of Dan, *Levi* is added, for the *roundneſs* of the number 12, perhaps too for the *myſteriouſneſs* of it, tho he's generally omitted in the old Genealogys, becauſe he had no *portion* or *Lot* (comparatively, nor together) as the reſt of the *Tribes*; whereas, as *Hamm.* and *Grot.* this *difference* was not taken away, and they were all *one* in Chriſt.

Advertiſement.

SOme Remarkable Paſſages in the *Life* and *Death* of Mr. *John Maſon*, late Miniſter of *Water-Stratford*, in the County of *Bucks*. With an account of what was taken by ſeveral that were at *Water-Stratford*, from Mr. *Maſon's* own Mouth, and others deputed by him. Drawn up by a Reverend Divine, *&c.* Publiſhed to Prevent falſe Reports. With a Relation of the Preſent ſtate of his Followers. To which is added the *Letters* Mr. *Maſon* ſent to ſeveral of his Friends, tending to promote the Power of Godlineſs both in Perſons and Families. As alſo many *Poems* which he writ on ſpecial occaſions. Never Printed before. *London*, Printed for *John Dunton*, who is removed from the *Poultry* to the *Raven* in *Jewen-ſtreet*. 1694. *Price* 1*s.*

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THeſe are to give notice, that the *Orphans* and *Creditors* of the *City* of *London*, do intend to meet on *Tueſday* the 15th of *Jan.* at the *Crown-Tavern*, behind the *Royal-Exchange*, at two a Clock, in order to Conſider of a petition to the Houſe of *Commons*, for leave to bring a bill for the Explanation of the late Act intitled, An Act for the Releaſe of, *&c.*

LONDON, Printed for John Dunton at the *Raven* in Jewen-Street, 1694